

Nadler Introduces Resolution on the Need for Adequate Housing for the Treatment and Prevention of HIV/AIDS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) reintroduced a concurrent resolution in the House of Representatives, “Expressing the sense of the Congress that the lack of adequate housing must be addressed as a barrier to effective HIV prevention, treatment, and care, and that the United States should make a commitment to providing adequate funding for developing housing as a response to the AIDS pandemic.” Research has shown that those living with HIV/AIDS have a much better chance of remaining healthy, avoiding risky practices and protecting the health of others when they are living in safe and stable housing. Too many of those with the disease have become homeless, or have been relegated to unsafe, temporary and crowded living conditions, where healthcare and control of the disease are severely compromised.

“Stable housing is not a luxury, but a necessity,” said Nadler. “I am reintroducing this resolution today in order to shine a light on the essential role that housing stability has on improving the health and safety of people living with HIV/AIDS. We must establish stable and affordable housing if we are to effectively solve this health crisis. I am hopeful that this resolution will be the first step in prompting further action by Congress in support of housing measures for those living with HIV/AIDS.”

The following is the complete text of the resolution:

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the lack of adequate housing must be addressed as a barrier to effective HIV prevention, treatment, and care, and that the United States should make a commitment to providing adequate funding for developing housing as a response to the AIDS pandemic.

Whereas adequate and secure housing for people with human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is a challenge with global dimensions and adequate housing is one of the greatest unmet needs of persons in the United States with HIV/AIDS;

Whereas growing empirical evidence shows that the socioeconomic circumstances of individuals and groups and structural factors such as housing status are of equal importance, or even greater importance, to health status than medical care and personal health behaviors;

Whereas the link between poverty and disparities in HIV risk and health outcomes is well established, and new research findings demonstrate the direct relationship between inadequate housing and greater risk of HIV infection, poor health outcomes, and early death;

Whereas rates of HIV infection are 3 to 16 times higher among persons who are homeless or unstably housed, 70 percent of all persons living with HIV/AIDS report a lifetime experience of homelessness or housing instability, and the HIV/AIDS death rate is 7 to 9 times higher for homeless adults than for the general population;

Whereas poor living conditions, including overcrowding and homelessness, undermine safety, privacy, and efforts to promote self-respect, human dignity, and responsible sexual behavior;

Whereas homeless and unstably housed persons are 2 to 6 times more likely to use hard drugs, share needles, or exchange sex for money and housing than similar persons with stable housing, as the lack of stable housing directly impacts the ability of people living in poverty to reduce HIV risk behaviors;

Whereas in spite of the evidence indicating that adequate housing has a direct positive effect on HIV prevention, treatment, and health outcomes, the housing resources devoted to the national response to HIV/AIDS have been inadequate and housing has been largely ignored in policy discussions at the international level; and

Whereas the Congress recognized the housing needs of people with HIV/AIDS in enacting the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program in 1990 as part of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (Public Law 101–625) and the HOPWA program currently serves 70,000 households: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) stable and affordable housing is an essential component of an effective strategy for HIV prevention, treatment, and care; and

(2) the United States should make a commitment to providing adequate funding for developing housing as a response to the AIDS pandemic.